



Church Goal \$2000 Given to Date \$1444

A note from a Southern Baptist missionary – Dear Collinsville Baptist family, I am Kelli Johnson, an IMB missionary serving in Thailand. Because of your faithful giving, I have been able to spend four years sharing the Gospel with exploited women and others – and have seen seven people come to Christ! I would love to hear from you. Gratefully Kelli
outpourbkk@outlook.com.

Operation Christmas Child – 22 boxes sent
Community Thanksgiving Service – 36 food boxes delivered in Collinsville,
Offering at service was \$500. Offering at Community Christmas was \$355.
Community Christmas Tree Lighting – rivers of hot chocolate served.
Thanks to all of you for your generosity.

Collinsville Baptist Church
P.O. Box 558
Collinsville, AL 35961

Non-profit Permit Imprint
Permit Number 2
Fort Payne, AL 35967

Christian Ladies of Collinsville (CLC)
Invites all women to join us for

***“Prayer Changes Things”
Ladies Retreat
Saturday, February 24, 2018***



**“The prayer of a righteous person is
powerful and effective.”**

James 5:16

9:00 to 1:00

(Registration begins at 8:30)

**Collinsville Community Center
(Formerly the National Guard Armory)**

- ♦ **Guest Speaker: Karmen Smith Motivational/Inspirational Speaker and Author of the journal “When You Pray Big Things Happen”**
- ♦ **Worship Leaders: Sexton Family Ladies**
- ♦ **No Admission Charge**
- ♦ **Lunch will be served by *Crit & Puck’s Catering***
- ♦ **Spanish translation available with prior request**
- ♦ **Leave ahead of the Trade Day Traffic and come shop**

Upscale Yard Sale: Treasures available for dedicated shoppers!

To Donate items to the Yard Sale or if you have other question:

Elaine 484-3598; Frances 524-2369; Annette 524-2792



I liked to stare at it. Especially with the blue bulb.

Christmas has lots of family traditions. That was true at my house when I was growing up. Morgan family law still followed today – if the tree is not touching the ceiling, it is too short. And it should be a cedar tree. With lots of lights. Some special bulbs – we had one bulb of ol’ Santa that lasted into my adult years. Lots of ornaments. I still have some on my tree I made as a child. Back then there was also tinsel, icicles and sometimes strings of popcorn. The cedar smell all through the house.

Mother had lots of other decorations for the living room. A little church with snow covered trees in front of it and a light inside. A large wreath she made from computer punch cards that she spray painted (no time to explain computer cards to you youngsters). Stockings on the fire place. My favorite decoration – lots of wrapped presents under the tree.

And we had manger scenes. My favorite one was the one she would let me put together. It was made out of cardboard and was not all that sturdy. It had seventeen pieces. The cardboard base, painted green for grass, had tabs. Each tab had to be pushed up from the board. Each piece had a slot that fitted into a tab so that it would stand up. And the board had printed on it what piece went in each place. Wise man here. Sheep here. No room for creativity. Do not put a camel on the roof.

So I would carefully put it together. Mother would take it and put it in just the right place. My favorite place was on the mantle. She added final touches like greenery until she was happy. The last thing was a light. An electrical cord with one tree light bulb on the end. The cord ran behind the cardboard and could not be seen from the front. The

bulb fitted into the cardboard behind the star. There was a hole in the roof so that the light shined onto the Holy Family. Especially onto the baby Jesus.

School would finally be out. The tree lights on and my mother in the kitchen making boiled custard and ambrosia. Yum, yum. My sisters mercifully leaving me alone (we had been warned Santa and his elves were on watch for bad behavior). I would go into the living room and stare at the manger scene. It was near perfect. Donkey and cow behind the family in the manger. Palm trees and Bethlehem buildings behind them. Wise Men and camel. Their gifts. Sheep. Shepherds. All the people staring at the baby. Including Mary and Joseph. I would look at each character.

I liked the old shepherd. White hair and beard. Somehow I knew he would be nice. For now, he stared at Jesus. And I liked the star on the roof. With the hidden light shining down. I knew the first Christmas must have looked just like that. I knew if I had been there I would have been staring at the baby. It was almost like I was there.

One year mother decided not to use the yellow or white bulb. She put in a blue bulb. The soft light made the scene perfect. A scene that could even tame a ten year old boy. *All is calm.* The blue light shone on Jesus. And the light seemed to flow out of the manger to me. *How still we see thee lie.* Perfect.

I know there were real problems for that family. Far from home. Roman soldiers, a forced census. Herod plotting and scheming. A fast dash to Egypt for safety upcoming.

But that is the point. We desperately need that soft light from the manger. Mother must have bought that manger set soon after World War II. A world not that different from Mary's. In the middle of war and hatred, our hope is still in the baby Jesus. And we all desperately need to be able to feel the peace of Jesus in our lives. *The hopes and fears of all the year are met in thee tonight*

I don't know what happened to that manger set. The cardboard tabs must have worn out, so frayed they could no longer hold up the characters. I remember trying to strengthen the tabs with scotch tape. The decision must have been made to throw it away.

That's okay. I still remember. Memories, especially Christmas memories, are powerful. And I can close my eyes and see the soft blue light again. And the baby Jesus. I feel the peace and I smile. Even after I open my eyes.

That peace is inside me. Because He is. Oh, I hope and pray He is with you. That's why He came. For you. For me.

Picture above is of an identical manger scene to the one I had as a child.

